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JACK KIRBY

In The Golden Age

By James Van Hise

GA: Before you worked in comic books, some of your earliest work was doing newspaper strips, wasn't it?

KIRBY: I did work for a small syndicate which had about four hundred papers called the Lincoln Newspaper Features Syndicate. I did a variety of work there and I was grateful for that because it prepared me for doing a variety of comics.

I did editorial cartoons. I did a cartoon called "Your Health Comes First" where I gave ordinary prescriptions, and I did comic strips.

GA: This is where you used different styles drawn under different names?

KIRBY: No, the styles looked different because the theme was different, but actually I didn't disguise my style, I just changed the name on the strip. One strip would be done by Jack Curtis and another strip would be done under another name. That gave the syndicate the aura of having a larger staff.

GA: What were the big influences on your work at the time? The adventure strips? The pulps?

KIRBY: The adventure strips were only just beginning at the time. *Dick Tracy* was, of course, the first real adventure strip, and *Buck Rogers* was one of the early ones. So having been an admirer of that type of thing, I felt that I'd like to do that as well. I picked themes along those lines, but I did them with a science fiction flavor which most of the others didn't have. I would do a story about an airplane which went back into time...

THE BOY COMMANDOS
JOIN THE LEGION OF FORGOTTEN MEN!
GIVE IT TO ZEM, BROOKLYN!
DON'T WORRY, ANDRE! I'M CHALKIN' UP A BETTER SCORE DAN DA DODGERS!
LOOK OUT, TEX! DON'T EXPOSE YOURSELF TOO MUCH! THAT FIRING'S HEAVY!
NO DOSSONE AYRNE'S A-GOIN' TO PLUG THIS TEXAS POOMUH! I COME FROM KINFOLKS THEY FOUGHT WITH DAVY CROCKETT!
LEGION ETRANGERE--THE FOREIGN LEGION! THEY SAY IT IS THE LAST STOP TO THE GRAVE! TO IT, FLOCK THE CAST-OFFS AND DERELICTS FROM EVERY NATION ON EARTH--AND THERE NO ONE DEFIES DEATH BY ASKING QUESTIONS! YET TO THE LEGION COME THE BOY COMMANDOS (BY A METHOD YOU'D NEVER GUESS) TO CAST THEIR LOT IN A FIERY WHIRLPOOL OF LEAD AND DOOM.

GA: That was the "Solar Legion", wasn't it?

KIRBY: Oh yes. I had an atomic cannon which was fairy tale stuff at that time. This was a time when there weren't even jets. No one could even conceive of jets, so if you did an atomic cannon you were sort of an *avant garde*, far out type of writer.

I began doing things that people would speculate about, but which, of course, nobody knew anything about.

GA: Did you have a special liking for the "Solar Legion", because in the late thirties you'd revive it whenever you had a new forum?

KIRBY: Yes I did because, first of all "The Solar Legion" involved a lot of characters. I grew up among a lot of people and being born in New York's lower East Side, which was a crowded section, there were people everywhere. And so I think it was natural for me to think in terms of groups, and of course I'd be included somewhere. My recollections of different types of people would be reflected in different themes in the comic strips. So if I did "The Solar Legion", I might include different types of people that I knew. They'd have that kind of temperament. Some of them would be cool. Some of them would be hot-tempered, and they'd be people in conflict and people who'd help each other.

GA: How much of your own writing were you doing then?

KIRBY: All of it. I've always done my own writing. When I got into comic books I began needing people like Joe Simon, and finally Joe and I got together to do Captain America. We were both professionals and we were both capable of writing the stuff, but Joe did most of the business. He was a big guy, six foot three, very impressive, and he had college experience which I didn't have. But I had a unique storytelling ability, so although he was quite capable of doing so, he never had to write the stories. I'd write the stories on Captain America or whatever we'd be working on and Joe did business with the publisher because he could meet the publisher on an equal footing. I was younger and I was the kid with the turtleneck sweater who was always working.

GA: What was the actual breakdown of work between you and Joe Simon on Captain America as far as pencilling, inking, etc.?

KIRBY: Well, I did most of it and Joe did some of it, but I did most of it because I had the time. I was constantly working. Joe had duties as an editor and he might be an editor in the publishing house and he'd be having contacts with the publisher that I didn't.

GA: Stan Lee was at Timely already by then, wasn't he?

KIRBY: Yes, he was a young boy then and he was a member of the publisher's family so he got a job there. I don't know what his duties were but from time to time he'd come into the office and play a flute or the clarinet while he was working and that was the extent of it.

GA: So Joe Simon edited Captain America himself?

KIRBY: Joe Simon edited all the Atlas (Timely) books. It wasn't called Marvel yet at that time but the publisher was the same.

At any rate, we left Atlas and we went to D.C. where we did the "Boy Commandos", "Sandman" and "Manhunter" and created the kinds of things that D.C. wanted. After we created those features we were drafted. Joe went into the Coast Guard and I went into the Army.

GA: Where did some of the other early characters come from, like the Black Owl and Cyclone Burke?

KIRBY: The Black Owl and Cyclone Burke were mine. Like I said, I was constantly at work and I created what was real. Creating characters is the kind of atmosphere in which I was raised, so whatever I created was accepted and it sold very well.

You'll find that I was forever writing and drawing; that I had no other duties, and I'm still doing it. That's my forte'. I was never an editor, but I was a publisher with Joe Simon. Joe and I published a few magazines together under the name of Mainline Publications, so we knew each other a long time. Our partnership went on over a period of years.

GA: What was it like working in comics in the Golden Age as compared to what it is today?

KIRBY: Everybody tried to help each other. All the fellows had a good working relationship, but there was a rigid caste system between the editors and the fellows who turn the magazines out, and the publisher. There was no such thing as an artist or a writer dealing with the publisher. The structure was rigid. That's why I say that Joe was valuable in his respect because he was able to deal with the publishers. We were the first team to get a percentage.

GA: On which books were those?

KIRBY: When we worked for Kressler Publications, we got a percentage, but up until that time nobody had been able to break that rigid structure between the artist, the writer and the publisher. It wasn't like legitimate publishing where you make a deal. It was a loose arrangement where we could leave anyone.

GA: What titles were those percentages on?

KIRBY: Black Magic, Justice Traps The Guilty and others. This was during the years of E.C. in the early Fifties. E.C. was doing extremely well; they had a talented bunch and Joe and I worked extra hard to put out the types of magazines that could keep up with them, and we did. We worked very hard and turned out some terrific stuff. We had wonderful stories.

GA: Did you ever consider doing anything for E.C.?

KIRBY: No. Joe and I had gotten into the habit of working with each other and somehow we just didn't consider taking off individually and working anywhere. It was like a habit, you know? That's the way we operated and where ever we operated we made a lot of money for the publishers. All of our books sold well over six hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand a month. That's why Joe and I were successful because we could produce that kind of product.

GA: On Captain America you had various inkers working from time to time doing a little work and I understand that Reed Crandall was one?

KIRBY: There was Reed Crandall, Al Gabriel and that was good because I personally like to see a variety of inking on my work just to see what it would look like in a different style. An inker like Joe Sinnott is very, very graceful and makes the art look graceful and beautiful. An inker like

STARMAN
No. 75 A BIG MANHUNTER
Adventure
JUNE
COMICS
10¢
"VILLAIN from VALHALLA"

SANDMAN

SANDMAN COMICS
HO HO HO-HAW-HAW!
WHAM! A BIG THE POLICE MAN WITH ONE HAND!
I KNOCK YOU DOWN I'LL HAVE TO!
THE SANDMAN WAS BEATEN TO A STONE WALL! THEN A HORSE BUMPED INTO HIM! THEN THE SANDMAN SANDMAN ACCOST!
BY THUNDER THIS IS FUN!

THIS IS SANDY!

Dick Ayers would be bold and stark and you'd find the style in a bold and stark attitude and of course that's interesting. For instance, if you went now to change into a tuxedo, you would look different but very, very interestng and that's the way it is with inkers. Each inker has his own individual style and so I didn't mind at all as long as he was professional and knew what he was doing.

GA: What inkers do you feel complimented your work the most?

KIRBY: All of them because each man was unique and original and I felt that they did a fine job.

Now that I'm doing *Captain Victory*, I like Mike Thibodeaux as my inker and he has a very strong line and I like the kind of dressing he gives my style, which is an inker's job. An inker dresses up what you've drawn. I never give an inker layouts. I give him the full drawing. He doesn't have to think about where to put a line — it's all there for him. I facilitate production, and that's how I meet a deadline. I complete my drawing and it's fully complete; they're very tight and if the inker goes over that, why then the drawing is complete.

GA: Why don't you ink your work now the way you did in the early days?

KIRBY: Because I find that if I get involved in all phases of it, that I'll never get it done. In other words, I might be late with deadlines and so I'll give it to an inker and we get the story out that way. We create our own system and being a professional, I like to meet a deadline. I'm the kind of guy who feels that that's what's demanded of him in the field, so I meet my deadlines right on the nose and sometimes before it's expected.

GA: Back to the subject of your Golden Age inkers, did you know Reed Crandall well at all?

KIRBY: I remember Reed, but I didn't know him real well. Few of us knew each other real well back then. It was more like fellas who meet at a social club and I didn't feel that it was my right to know him real well. I think that the other fellows felt the same way. I felt that everybody's entitled to his own life and unless he invited me, if he had a problem and he felt that my advice might help him, then I would go deeper into his problems, otherwise we would just be like ordinary fellows who met somewhere every day at a social club and had a great time.

GA: Did D.C. actually lure you away from Timely in the early Forties?

KIRBY: Oh yes. They would offer us more and at that time we would just take off.

GA: Did Timely have a counter-offer, or did they just say, well, this is the best we can do?

KIRBY: Sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't. It depended on the circumstance. Of course I relied on Joe because he knew more about business than I did, and he knew more about what the publisher wanted than I did—he had closer ties with them. So Joe would give me the entire problem and I would say, well, it looks like we'd get a better offer there than we are. And Joe would take my advice and I would take his advice.

GA: Was it your idea to take an already established D.C. character, The Sandman, and revamp him into something totally different?

KIRBY: Yes. I felt that each man has a right to innovate and to guess at what the character really represents and The Sandman would represent something entirely different to me than he would to another guy.

GA: The character originally wore a gas mask and was more like Batman.

KIRBY: To me he represented something entirely different, and I'd get him into dreams and into nightmares, and to me that's what he meant. I might make a slight change of costume but I never really changed the image of the character. It's incumbent on every artist to keep the image intact.

For instance, in the second Superman movie, there was a scene where the president of the United States was humiliated and I somehow couldn't stand this. It was something that I would never do in a comic strip. Oh yes, the White House might be in danger and the villain is getting closer to it, but I would have Superman stop him just in time. Remember, you're a different generation, and the feeling was at that time that, "You can't do that to an American! And you can't do that to the President!". And you just can't come in and lounge around the White House. You've got to protect it, that's what you represent. Superman is that kind of character. He represents us in a very wholesome way. He fights for us, and my characters would do the same thing. Captain America represents us and he'll fight for us. He'll put his body across the line for us and the other superheroes are the same way. They see us in a protective attitude because it's an unfair situation between us and superheroes, so in all fairness superheroes have to come to

CAPTAIN AMERICA
The RETURN of the RED SKULL
CAPTAIN AMERICA
ALL WINNERS PROUDLY PRESENTS
CAPTAIN AMERICA
in The STRANGE CASE of the MALAY IDOL

our aid because we're the underdog and we can't possibly fight in their league.

But in this fantasy, they represent us. They're us. They do the things that we feel that we'd like to do.

Captain America was really an acrobat with wonderful reflexes. He could fight ten guys at a time and I'm sure most of us wonder what we could do in the same situation. Suppose ten guys corner you? But I'd arrange it in Captain America that a wonderful fight scene would come out of that, almost like a ballet, and it wouldn't be the kind of fight that we'd ordinarily see.

GA: A lot of your images in comics seem to be drawn more from movies than from other comics.

KIRBY: Our generation was a movie generation. I saw myself as a camera, that's why I do a lot of foreshortening. I've developed a kind of three-dimensional style.

Comics used to have a kind of sameness to them. For instance, the Egyptions had their hieroglyphics, and you'll find they had a sameness to them. But suppose one Egyptian suddenly said, "I don't like drawing things sideways. I'll make a front view, and I'll shove his arm out and it'll add strength to the picture." And that's what I did. I had a fighter on my hands and I had to make him look like a fighter. You have to see a player from all angles, and having had animation experience, that helped a lot because I put a lot of movement into my figures.

GA: You worked on Popeye, didn't you?

KIRBY: Oh yes. Popeye, Betty Boop. I did a little bit of *Gulliver's Travels.* That was a big help in the kind of work that I'm doing. It made my figures move. It set a style for me which everybody recognized.

GA: Were there any specific films you saw at that time which had a greater impact on your work?

KIRBY: I liked all films. Hollywood was turning out many great films, then.

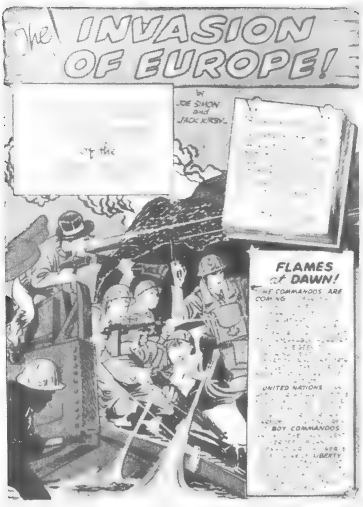
Essentially I'm a storyteller. One particular theme I notice for instance, is that some people love barbarians and they won't read or write or draw any other thing but a barbarian. But I'm a variety storyteller. It could be a war story, a romance, a western, crime as well as a superhero. I think that a storyteller has to be ready to make a story out of any of those things and entertain you in that respect. I believe that's the ultimate professional, a man who can do that.

I had the privilege of doing *The Losers* for D.C., a war story, and I put some real elements in there, some elements that I'd experienced and of course that facilitated the realism for the story, which made it acceptable. It wasn't a fantasy war story. It was the real McCoy. But the characters had color, and they had a reason for being there. It was their story but their surroundings were real, and they were accepted by the reader.

I won't tell you any lies. I might fantasize. I might dramatize, and I might make my characters with a little more flourish, but they'll never lie to you. They'll always be the truth. You'll find that element in them and you'll accept them. If a guy's a PFC in one of my stories, he's going to act like a PFC, and if he's a businessman, he's going to be the kind of businessman that I know.

GA: How did you feel that Captain America was handled after you left the book in the early Forties?

KIRBY: I didn't watch it. I just paid attention to what I was doing. I let the other guy be himself. He had to find his own visions while I still go looking for mine. Maybe that's the kind of ego I have, but I'm interested in what I'm thinking. I feel that I'm an individual and that what I'm thinking is very, very important. And I believe that what you're thinking is very, very important. I get an impression of what the other guys are doing but I just don't absorb it fully. I'm



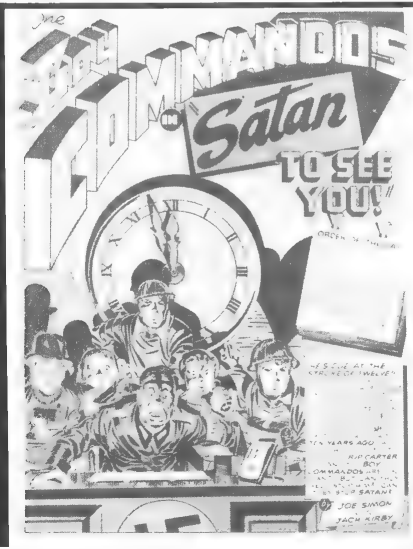
professional enough to tell you whether they're doing a good job or a bad job, but I'm not going to give you a treatise on it. I'm not going to give you a lecture on it because I don't study it that deeply.

GA: Obviously, when you came up with Captain America you created a character which had a lot of impact in that it was able to continue on long after you had left the book.

KIRBY: Good characters do. Of course Superman is still around, too, as well as Captain America and you'll find that all the characters from the Golden Age still have that strength and validity that they've always had and that's why they've survived. You'll find them still doing the Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch. The Fantastic Four are still going after twenty some years.

GA: When you came to D.C. and you revamped the Sandman and you created the Newsboy Legion, why did you do those characters as opposed to picking up some of the more well-known characters D.C. was doing and doing them your way, like Batman, Superman...?

KIRBY: Because I didn't like taking away a job from another guy. I felt that they should do that job and I wanted to do my own job. In other words, if another man was working on a character that they had, that was great with me because it would be easy enough for me to create my own character and compete with them. I'm a competitor. I made up my mind to beat five guys, ten guys, because I was a little guy and you'll find that little guys are cantankerous, independent, and they want to be themselves. Of course you'll find that among big guys too, but more so, I think, among the



smaller people because they have to fight to be noticed.

GA: Did you try to do anything different with your strips at Harvey when you did Stuntman and Boy Explorers?

KIRBY: Yes. I was trying to do a different kind of ship strip, of boys on a ship and I had them going over the edge of the world and finding places that people had never thought of!

And if I did a western, it would be a different type of western, with a different type of cowboy. I didn't do the average cowboy. Doing any theme is kind of a challenge to me. I don't want to work like the next guy. I want to work how I see it. My type of cowboy. My type of knight. If I did a barbarian strip, it would be my type of barbarian.

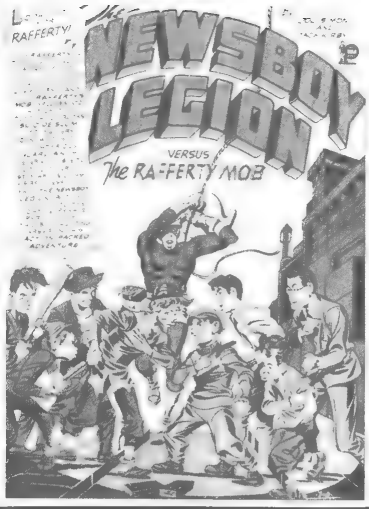
I did a strip called Atlas for D.C. which got a mountain of mail and it only ran for a couple of issues but I got a lot of mail on it because for the type of character it was, it was a Hercules-type of character, it was different. So I was gratified by that.

GA: Were there any types of characters that you wanted to do in the Forties but you never had a chance to do because the trend shifted in the late Forties from superheroes into horror and crime?

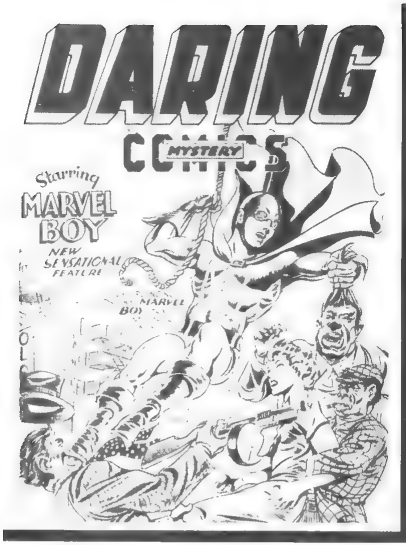
KIRBY: No. There was nothing. I felt that I could do whatever was thrown at me. In other words, to me a job is a job. I'm a thorough professional, and I'm more interested in being a professional than being an immortal artist of some kind. I built up my job to sell magazines and that's what I did. So it didn't matter to me what they had or what they were doing. If they said, do a job, this kind of a job, I would get it done.

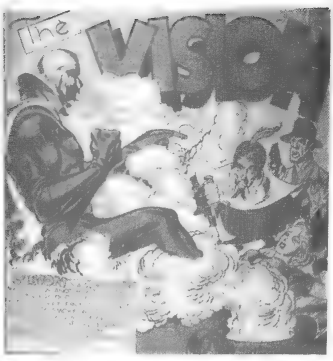
GA: Wasn't Mercury, a character you did briefly for Timely, similar to the Thor which Marvel would do many years later?

KIRBY: Yes, and I also did a version of Thor for D.C. in the Fifties before I did him for Marvel. He had a red beard but he was a legendary figure, which I liked. I liked the figure of Thor at D.C. and I created Thor at Marvel because I was forever enamored of legends and I knew all about these legends, which is why I knew about Balder and Heimdall and Odin. I tried to update Thor and put him in a superhero costume, and he looked great in it and everybody loved



RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-
YEAH WELCOME BACK, YOU RATS!
SCARFACE! NO! LISTEN
THEY'RE ALL DEADER N DOORNAILS, SCARFACE! D-D'YA THINK THE COPS'LL LET YA GET AWAY WITH IT?
WHAT DID YOU SAY? YOU--
STILL IN THE THROES OF HIS UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE, SCARFACE TURNED HIS FURY UPON HIS UNLUCKY HENCHMAN!
YOU LITTLE PUNK! SCARFACE OWNS THE COPS-- THE CITY THE COUNTRY!
NOW, GET THIS AND GET IT GOOD! FROM NOW ON ANY LUNK HEAD WHO SHOWS ME ANY DISRESPECT GETS A BELLY-FULL OF LEAD, UNDERSTAND?





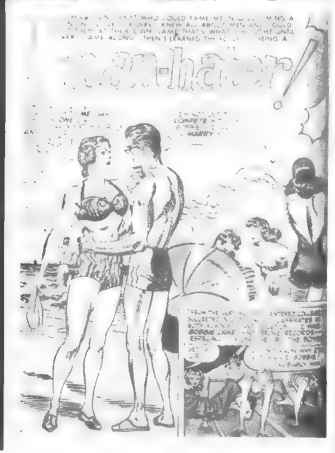
him but he was still Thor.

GA: On your Golden Age Captain America, did you change the shield from the triangle in the first issue to the circular version in the second so that it could be more of a tool for him?

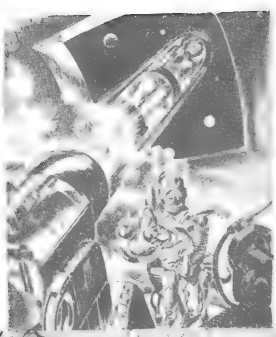
KIRBY: I changed the shield from a triangle because I felt that it was the kind of thing that you couldn't do much with, except puncture a wall like a spear. But with a circular shield you could be tricky and there were wider uses for a circular shield and therefore it was better for the character.

GA: Was that full page drawing in Captain America number 4 actually the first full page drawing done in a comic book continuity strip at that time?

KIRBY: Yes, we were always innovating. We did the first double-page splash and there were none done before Simon and Kirby created it. We felt that the format of the comic book had to have a little balance. A double-splash added to the dramatization of what we were doing. It created a greater impact and therefore the double-spread stayed. To this very day the double-spread is very effective because it's big and explosive and it dramatizes what you want to say. Like I say, I didn't want to work like the next guy. I wanted to do things the way I saw them and I still do that to this day.

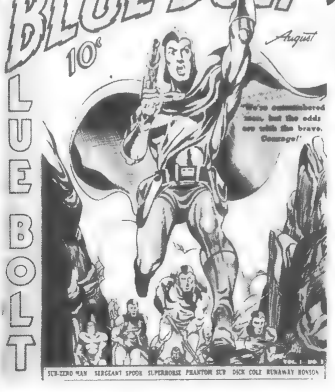


THE DIARY of DR. HAYWARD
by Curt Davis



AS HE DISPATCHES THE MOBSTERS,
SUNTHANN HEARS THE RACING ENGINE
OF THE VAN OUTSIDE!!

AUG. - SEPT. 1954
FIGHTING
AMERICAN
10¢
Don't laugh ---
they're not funny-
POISON IVAN
and
HOTSKY TROTSKI
PRIZE
GROUP
POISON IVAN?


BLUE BOLT
10¢
August
"We're outnumbered
men, but the odds
are with the brave.
Courage!"
BLUE BOLT
SUB-ZERO MAN SERGEANT SPOOK SUPERHORSE PHANTOM SUB DICK COLT RUNAWAY BOY10A

AJAX
THE SUN MAN
A STEEL MILL HUMS BUSILY AT NIGHT, FURNISHING THE IMPLEMENTS OF DEFENSE FOR AMERICA.....
IN THE MACHINE SHOP PROFESSOR CRANE'S SENSATIONAL NEW ROCKET-BOMBER HAS JUST BEEN FINISHED.
IT IS COMPLETELY ASSEMBLED AND READY TO FLY, PROFESSOR CRANE.
I'LL PRESENT IT TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT DEFENSE PROGRAM.
BUT FIRST, I'LL TEST IT. WAIT HERE, JOAN.
YES FATHER.
ARISE and C. BINDER

BUT SUDDENLY, IN THE MILL...
LOOK! THAT LADLE FULL OF MOLTEN STEEL TIPPED!
HA, HA! THAT WILL KEEP THE FOOLS OCCUPIED!
PANDEMONIUM REIGNS IN THE STEEL MILL!
HELP! I'M BURNING ALIVE!
THE WHOLE PLANT WILL BURN DOWN!
FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE SUN AJAX RACES EAST...
WHAT'S THE EXCITEMENT DOWN THERE IN THAT STEEL MILL?
FIRE!
MY JOB IS DONE! A SABOTEUR! NOW TO SKIP! HE SET THE PLACE ON FIRE! BUT I'LL GET THEM LATER. FIRST THOSE TRAPPED MEN.....
HELP! WE'RE BURNING TO DEATH!
UNAFRAID OF FLAMES, AJAX RUSHES INTO THE BURNING BUILDING.....
SEVENTY TIMES FASTER THAN THE SUN, WHERE CAME FROM?

SAVE US, SAVE US
I'LL SAVE YOU!
QUICKEST WAY OUT'S
JUST GRAB HOLD
UP THROUGH THAT BURNED
OUT HOLE IN THE
GOLLY, WE'RE
MUST BE
AJAX, THE SUN MAN!
MEANWHILE, IN THE MACHINE SHOP
PROFESSOR RANE AND HIS DAUGHTER ARE ALONE, WHILE THE REST RAN TO THE FIRE!
NOW'S OUR CHANCE!
JA, HERR STOFFEL!
INTO THAT SHIP
PROFESSOR RANE'S GOING TO
NOT YOU, SISTER!
FATHER!
I SEE THE FIRE WAS A STALL SO THOSE FOREIGN AGENTS COULD STEAL THE ROCKET-BOMBER! I'LL PUT A STOP TO IT...

...WITH A FLASH AND A ROAR THE ROCKET SHIP TAKES OFF!
FULL SPEED AHEAD PROFESSOR CRANE!
AND VANISHES WITH INCREDIBLE SPEED!
IT GO? IT'S OUT OF SIGHT ALREADY!
WHERE DO THEY TAKE HER FATHER?
I DON'T KNOW! THEY ARE FOREIGN AGENTS WHO HAVE BEEN AFTER DAD FOR A LONG TIME, TO GET THE PLANS FOR THE ROCKET BOMBER NOW THEY'VE SUCCEEDED!
NOT ONLY IS HER FATHER ... AMERICA! IF THE ... ARE ABLE ... BUILD A FLEET OF ROCKET BOMBERS AND ... THEY'LL TAKE DAD TO THEIR SECRET BASE SOMEWHERE... AND TORTURE PLANS FROM HIM! THEN I'LL NEVER SEE MY FATHER AGAIN!
YES YOU WILL! I PROMISE YOU THAT!
LATER AT THE SECRET ... STRONGHOLD SOME ... WHERE IN THE ANTARCTIC ...
HERE IS OUR SECRET ... YOU WILL HELP US BUILD A FLEET OF ROCKET BOMBERS, PROFESSOR CRANE! THEN WE WILL ATTACK AMERICA!
YOU NAZI DEVILS! NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO ME, I'LL NEVER HELP YOU!
YOU'LL LISTEN TO REASON SOON PROFESSOR, WAIT TILL YOU SEE WHO YOUR CELL MATES ARE, HA, HA, HA,!
I'LL NEVER GIVE IN TO YOU ... GIANT SPIDERS!

HERR STOFFEL CALLS A CONFERENCE.....
A GREAT CITY SLUMBERS UNAWARE OF DANGER IN THE SKIES
THE FOUNDATIONS OF NEW YORK CITY ROCK
A BOMBING ATTACK! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
AJAX SPEEDS TO THE RESCUE
THE FOREIGN AGENTS AGAIN! I MUST SAVE NEW YORK FROM TOTAL DESTRUCTION!
COME TO ME, BABY!
SUPPOSE YOU GO BACK

HEY, VOT ISS?
THE BOMB CAME BACK!
ALL THE BOMBS ARE COMING BACK!
WHO IS SPOILING OUR FUN?
IT IS THAT CRAZY MAN ALONE THERE!
WE WILL RAM HIM OUT OF THE SKY!
OHO, SO THEY CHALLENGE THE MIGHT OF AJAX!
SHIP
CRACK
WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS HE?
HE MAY NOT BE KILLED!
HE EVEN DENTED THE SHIP!
SWING AROUND. WE WILL GET HIM IN OUR ROCKET BLASTS AND BURN HIM TO A CRISP!
YA!

SHIP'S BLAZING HOT ROCKET BLASTS SWEEP OVER AJAX!
HA,HA, LOOK! HE IS BEING BURNED ALIVE!
THAT TAKES CARE OF HIM!
NOW WE WILL RETURN TO OUR BASE.
BUT UNKNOWN TO THE PILOTS...
THEY DON'T KNOW THAT I EAT FIRE FOR BREAK-FAST. NOW I'LL LET THEM LEAD ME TO THEIR SECRET STRONGHOLD!
NOT LONG AFTER THE SHIP DESCENDS...
GREENLAND! SO HERE'S WHERE THEY OPERATE FROM!
BEFORE THEY LAND.....
LOOK! THE OWNER OF THAT SHIP!
DON'T!

THE NAZI AIRMEN FALL BEFORE THE MIGHT OF AJAX!
AND THEN THERE WERE NONE!
TICKLISH JOB, PUTTING ON THIS UNIFORM! AND GUIDING THE SHIP AT THE SAME TIME
BLOW, HERR STOFFEL GRETTA THE RETURNED BOMBER, UNAWARE OF THE TRICK!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CREW?
THEY LOST CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THE SPEED.
OR MAYBE THEY'RE ACTING!
BUT THE BOMBING MISSION WAS A SUCCESS.
GOOD! AS SOON AS PROFESSOR CRANE RELEASES HIS PLANS OUR SECRET PLANTS WILL TURN OUT A FLEET OF BOMBERS, WEEK IN GREEN—AND WE WILL PLEN BOMB AMERICA TO ASHES!
HAS PROFESSOR CRANE TALKED YET?
NO! THE AMERICAN PIG IS OBSTINATE!
BUT I WILL GO NOW AND PRETEND TO BE HIM. WE WILL TALK AGAIN LATER. I'LL GO TO THE BARRACKS AND REST.
AT LAST! REACHING A SECLUDED SPOT AJAX DISCARDS HIS UNIFORM
THIS ENEMY NEST MUST BE MOPED OUT. BUT FIRST I MUST RESCUE PROFESSOR CRANE BEFORE HE'S TORTURED BY THESE DEVILS!
HERE'S THE PRISON! PROFESSOR CRANE MUST BE IN ONE OF THEM.

STEEL-STRONG FINGERS SILENCE THE GUARD.
AGH!
I WON'T TALK! I WON'T TALK!.. OH WHO ARE YOU?
I'M AJAX THE SUN-MAN, YOUR FRIEND. I PROMISED YOUR DAUGHTER TO SAVE YOU. COME WITH ME
THERE'S THE MONSTER. GET HIM, BEFORE HE ESCAPES WITH PROFESSOR CRANE!
THEY'RE AFTER US!
THE CHASE LEADS THROUGH THE STEEL MILL!
STOP THEM. DUMP OVER A BUCKET OF MOLTEN METAL!
DEATH
PROFESSOR CRANE DARTS ASIDE AS A RIVER OF MOLTEN STEEL ENGULFS AJAX
LOOK OUT AJAX!
THAT FINISHES HIM NOW YOU WILL BE TORTURED FOR YOUR PLANS PROFESSOR!
TALK PIG! OR THIS MARK WILL BE BRANDED ALL OVER YOUR HIDE!

BUT A FIGURE LEFT FOR DEAD...
THIS MOLTEN METAL STUNNED ME FOR A MOMENT, WHEN I FELL. NOW FOR THE SLOWDOWN!
GANGWAY!
ULP!
HMMEL IS ALIVE!
AJAX GRABS THE BRANDING IRON FROM HERR STOFFEL.
GOT YOU AWAY AT LAST. NOW ONE MORE THING.....
OW WWW!
LET ME BRAND YOU RATZI!
RADIATING ALL THE SUN-POWERS CONTAINED IN HIS BODY, AJAX MELTS THE GLACIERS AROUND THE SECRET STRONGHOLD!
AND THAT'S THE END OF THEIR SECRET STRONGHOLD!
MILLIONS OF GALLONS OF WATER FLOOD DOWN INTO THE ENEMY BASE!
NO ONE CAN ESCAPE THAT FLOOD ALIVE!
LATER AT THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL IN WASHINGTON....
FATHER YOU'RE BACK!
AND NOW I CAN DELIVER THE ROCKET BOMBER PLANS! BUT AJAX, LET US THANK YOU FOR SAVING AMERICA.
FAREWELL!
DOES AJAX RETURN, WHEN AMERICA NEEDS HIM AGAIN? SEE THE NEXT ISSUE OF DOC SAVAGE COMICS

LARS of MARS in "THE EARTHSHAKER!"

A MAD MAN THREATENED AN ENTIRE CITY WITH UTTER DESTRUCTION! EVEN THE GREATEST BRAINS IN THE CITY WERE HELPLESS AGAINST THIS MENACE UNTIL **LARS OF MARS** ROCKETED THROUGH THE NIGHT TO FRUSTRATE THE DIABOLICAL SCHEME OF --

"THE EARTHSHAKER!"

AS LARS OF MARS LEAVES THE TELEVISION STUDIO AFTER HIS SHOW, AN EXCITED VOICE FROM A WALL-SPEAKER STOPS HIM IN HIS TRACKS

THAT HAM ACTS AS IF HE REALLY THOUGHT HE WAS A MAN FROM MARS!

ATTENTION! SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN! IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THIS CITY HAS RECEIVED A WARNING THAT THREATENS ITS VERY EXISTENCE..

YEAH! HEY! LISTEN!

AND THIS UNKNOWN MADMAN DEMANDS THE COMPLETE SURRENDER OF THE CITY BY TOMORROW MORNING, OR HE WILL DESTROY THE CITY BY **EARTHQUAKE!**

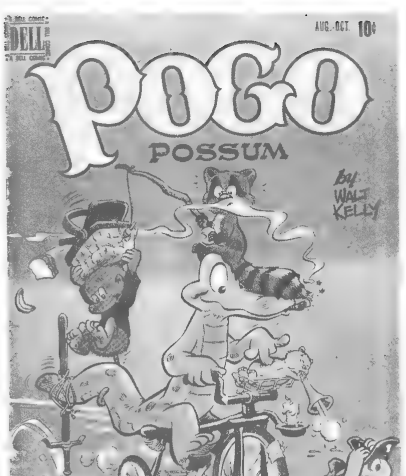
I'D BETTER GET BACK TO MY APARTMENT AND CONTACT **MARS!**

LATER...
LARS CALLING MARS! LARS CALLING MARS! CAN YOU HELP ME FIGHT THIS EARTHQUAKE THREAT TO NEW YORK?
IT IS NO IDLE THREAT! UNLESS YOU ACT, NEW YORK WILL BE DESTROYED TOMORROW! THE MAN RESPONSIBLE HAS HIS HEADQUARTERS IN A DEEP UNDERGROUND CAVE IN KENTUCKY! EARTH COORDINATES FOLLOW.
MOMENTS LATER, THE MAN FROM MARS STREAKS SOUTHWARD...
REACH KENTUCKY IN TEN MINUTES
PERFECT! THIS IS THE SPOT WHERE THE COORDINATES MEET--AND THERE'S THE MOUNTAIN AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE. THERE'S A GUARD OUTSIDE!
A MOMENT LATER AS THE BODY OF THE GUARD TURNS TO DUST AS A SHAFT OF RAY HAS BEEN EMPTY SHAFTS A MERE SECOND AGO.
YIPES! WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
NEVER MIND WHERE I CAME FROM! YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP!
YOU WILL AWAKEN IN TWO HOURS!-- NOW, INTO THE CAVE--!

BUT BOSS WHAT IF THE GADGET DON'T WORK?
IT WILL WORK! LOOK I'LL SHOW YOU AGAIN!
THERE'S MY MAN!
SEE? THE MACHINE IS SET AT ONLY A TINY FRACTION OF ITS POWER -- AND SOLID ROCK CRUMBLES UNDER ITS VIBRATIONS! NOW IF THE MACHINE WERE LEFT TO REVOLVE AT FULL POWER IN THE MIDST OF A CITY LIKE NEW YORK...
WOW! IT'D KNOCK EVERY BUILDING FLAT IN A MINUTE!
BUT SUDDENLY...
AN INTRUDER! SHOOT HIM DOWN!
BETTER NOT TRY IT, PAL!
AS LARS SWINGS TO ACT ON A COWARDLY BLOW FROM BEHIND FELLS HIM...
DWWW!
THAT'LL QUIET YOU, BIG BOY!
LATER LARS REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS TO DISCOVER HE IS HELPLESSLY BOUND...
OHHH! - MY HEAD - WOW! JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THAT MACHINE -- AND THEY'VE GOT IT TRAINED RIGHT ON ME!
WELL SHOW THIS MEDDLER WHAT HAPPENS TO ANY-ONE WHO INTERFERES TURN ON THE MACHINE!
I'M GOING TO REPAY THIS BIG BOZO FOR THAT SLUG ON THE JAW.

TAKE THAT... OOOOOF...
LOOK OUT, YOU FOOL... THE MACHINE IS TURNED ON!!
AIEEEEEE!
QUICKLY! AIM THE MACHINE AT THE MARTIAN. KILL HIM!
THE LEADER'S HENCHMAN GRABS THE MACHINE BUT IN HIS HASTE HE RELEASES THE SAFETY CATCH, AND...
YOU FOOL! WE'LL ALL BE KILLED! RUN! RUN!
NO USE HANGING AROUND HERE. I'M GETTING OUT-- AND FAST!! OH-OH! I ALMOST FORGOT! MY HANDS ARE TIED. I'VE GOT TO GET THEM LOOSE TO GET MY JET STARTED!
WITH SECONDS TO SPARE, LARS FRANTICALLY YANKS AT HIS BONDS, USING EVERY BIT OF STRENGTH IN HIS MUSCULAR BODY...
I'VE GOT TO ... UGH I'VE ... THERE! — I'M FREE.
WHEW! CLOSE ISN'T THE WORD FOR THAT SHAVE! WELL, NEW YORK CAN REST EASY NOW. THAT'S THE LAST OF THAT THREAT.
CRASH
BACK TO THE TELEVISION SHOW AGAIN... UNTIL THE NEXT BATCH OF TROUBLE COMES ALONG

FROM ANIMAL COMICS TO DAILY STRIP



JEFF GORRELL

PART TWO: ALARUMS AND DIVERSIONS

Trying to characterize the "Albert and Pogo" episodes in latter issues of *Animal Comics*, and the "Pogo" stories in the Four Color (numbers 105 and 148) and regular series, is like trying to pin down the rich, idiosyncratic visions of the Marx Brothers, Richard Lester, Woody Allen and the like. The humor, which is the *raison d'etre* of their works is original and unrepeatable. The plots almost defy summary. The progression of action is impressionistic. Identities of the characters are fluid. "Reality" (what *is* the reality of funny animal stories, anyway?) merges with fantasy, and adventure flows into slapstick sequences and farce.

In many ways this could also be said about the legion of funny animal stories from the Forties. In Bugs Bunny, in Tom and Jerry, in Donald Duck, in Oswald the Rabbit, over and over again the character engages in a wide variety of experiences—some fitting very neatly into the individual strip's world view and others standing apart from the ordinary dimensions of the funny animal framework. However, the generally plastic character of most funny animal stories fluctuates only from story to story. Donald, for example, may hold a variety of jobs and be sent to innumerable areas of the globe, but each story has an inner integrity, an adherence to a constant premise that makes it hold together. Likewise, Bugs may get in all sorts of trouble, but within any one story his antics are bound by a narrow range of assumptions. The really far-fetched stories are rare and they stand out as curiosities (e.g. the first story in Oswald Four Color 67).

One of the immediate indications of the recognizability and predictability of most animal stories is that, once the basic plot device is introduced, you can "read" the rest of the story quickly, without paying much attention to the dialogue. Not so with Pogo. In order to understand the kaleidoscopic plot twists that are characteristic of all the Pogo stories, the reader has to slow down, actually *read* what is being said and *see* what is being done. He cannot skim the pages and expect realistically to pick up the intricacies of the stories. Thus, in this way the Pogo stories are more dense, more surprising and more varied than most other funny animal stories. It's like eating fruit cake after dining on Hostess Twinkies.

Even slowing down to read Pogo is less than sufficient. The dialogue, probably more than any other dialogue in comic book history, is aural. It works best when it is read out loud, and even better if the reader has a thick Southern accent. And that is an interesting fact, because the most fluid dimensions of the stories are verbal. Not only is the language changeable but it also changes how the action in the stories proceeds and it accounts for the chameleon-like structure of the plots.

As Albert mellows and becomes accepted by the other swamp critters for what he is, a gradual proliferation of inhabitants occurs (do they come out

of hiding because they are now safe from consumption?). As the population of the swamp evolves, communication among the creatures begins to break down. The meanings of words often are confused, as are the words themselves. Thus, *whaling* is confused with *wailing (Animal 13); Nature's creatures* confused with *Nature's screechers (Animal 25);* a *case o'weasels* (wheezing away) is confused with a *case of measles (Four Color 105)* and an *atom bomb* is confused with *Adam bomb (Four Color 148).*

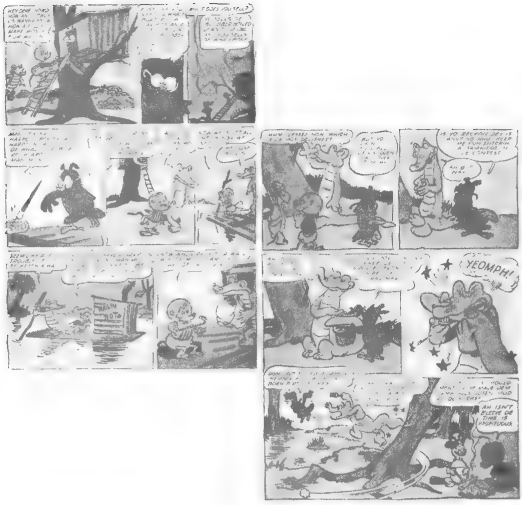
Kelly has always been good at plays on words, but in the above examples and in many other instances he is not merely making puns. His verbal talent provides the turning point and the motivating factor for many a story. In each of the above cases storylines hinge upon the failure of one or more animals to interpret the words they hear accurately.

But that is not all. A barrage of puns greets the reader of most of these stories. each one with the potential of changing the focus and spinning the already tottering plot elements off into realms unknown. When this is combined with the fact that the animals really aren't very good at sending and receiving messages, because they are so wrapped up in their private fantasy worlds, anything can happen. For an example of how this can work, witness the following plot fragment from *Animal 13.*

In the opening panel Albert and Pogo having pooled their talents for lazy fishing, doze while they wait for a *bite,* A mosquito lands on Albert's toe and gives him a *bite.* Albert's reflex reactions cause Pogo to fall into Albert's open mouth (Incidentally, I think Pogo and Albert are such good friends because they know each other inside and out). Looking around, Albert says: "Pogo! Where is you? Must be us got a *bite*" He decides that Pogo has been swallowed by a monster (which would be true, but Al has reformed), and, reacting tearfully over the loss of his friend, and also to feeling Pogo inside him, says he has a *lump* in his throat. Since the *lump* is Pogo, Al retrieves him and they decide to go looking for the big fish who must have caused the incident.

ALBERT AND POGO
WHY DAT SIMPLE - OWL SAY HE ALL IS SCREECHERS, AN' HE WANT US KINDA NEW SCREECHERS
WHUT KIND OF A SCHOOL IS DIS? A SCHOOL FER WHALIN' UNDERWATER
LISTEN AT HA BEST SCREECHIN' MAKE - SHIFT HERE
AH CAIN'T SCREECH! WHUT'S MORE, AH WON'T
HIPP? WHUT KIN'D OF SCREECHIN IS DAT - HIPP? MAN 'O' DONE FLUNK OUT! TIME 'N AGAIN I HEARDS A SCREECHIN' TEST
WHUT'N DUDDIT TO IT, HIPP? - I'S GOTTA FOUND TO SOME FATER GOOD SCREECHERS SO DEM LIL WINS OF PRIDE FO' DE MOBIST SCREECHER
DAT'S RIGHT - COME IN YOU AL' SCREECHIN'?
AH GOT A HORN HOME AH'LL GIT DAT - DATLL HELP
YEEE OWP! WIP WIP! YEOOOOWIE!
NOT BAD! YOU PUT OUT HA SEEGAR - NOW LISSEN AT ME
WOOOOOOOOOOOOP! GROWP!
PERTY GOOD ALBERT!
AH DON'T KEER IF DE LESSER SPOTTED EGRO DID 'FROMP' ON OF HAND WORKED IT POINTS DOWN DAT'S DE PLACE
IF IT AIN'T, AH WHOPS YO WIF DE TURNUP
SEEMS AS IF AH KIN GET EVEN WIF ALBERT FO' EATIN' ALL HA GOODIES AN' WE CAIN CHEECKY AN' DE OWL ALL AT ONCE!
ALL AH NEEDS IS A TABLE CLOTH - HOAS ALBERT DIDN'T EAT DAT!
FROMP
HA SAKES, BUT ALBERT MADE A MESS OF DISH YORE PLACE! WHAT WITH DE BED SPRINGS ON HA FEETS - EHEH WIF A TABLE CLOTH
AH MAKES A PERTY TOLERABLE GHOSTY
DIG, YOU DAWG! AIN' IF YOU DON'T FIND DE CREST, YO IS GARMIN' OUT YO' OWN MELLODIZIN'
YOWIE! LOOKIE! SUMPIN' ADORIBLE COMIN UNDER FULL SAIL!
WHOOOOOOO
POGO

When Al tells Uncle Antler (a moose) about the big fish, Antler asks if they know anything about *whaling.* So Al and Pogo *wail* loudly. Antler stalks off to get his *whaling* outfit so he can sell *blubber.* Al and Pogo then vow that they can out-*blubber* him and go to see Howland Owl about the possibility of making money from *wailing.* Upon hearing the word *wailing,* Howland flips into a rhapsodic fantasy about the



romance and excitement of the *whaling* experience. Since they have their own associations with the word *wailing*, Al and Pogo are unconvinced. Their brand of *wailing* is not so spectacular.

Out on their raft they attempt capturing a *wail* (made by blowing through a harmonica) in a bucket. That strategy doesn't work, so they peel onions to work up some good *blubbering*, then try to boil down their tears from the onions (*blubber*) to make oil. This fails too.

Notice that the direction the story takes and the ways it changes derive from the very personal associations each character has with the words used. Not only do verbal misunderstandings or plays on words lead to verbal fantasies, but also to extend action. For example, a duel between Antler and Albert using *horns* as weapons pits Albert with a tuba and Antler with his antlers *(Animal 9)*. Sizing each of the opponents up immediately prior to the duel, each side concludes that the other is "total unprepared" for the fight because of their vastly different interpretations of the word *horn*.

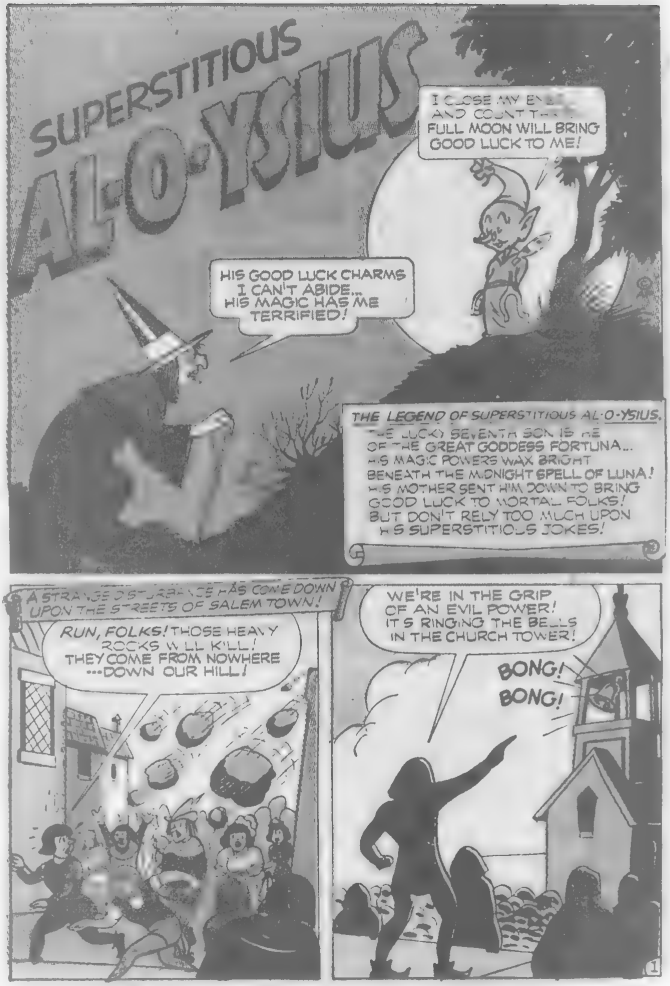
When it is not words themselves that direct the action it is the rich fantasy life of the main characters that leads them off into attempts to make their fantasies reality. For example, when Al and Pogo go off on an expedition seeking the Fountain of Youth, a series of incidental accidents convince Howland and Churchy that they have been transformed into younger versions of themselves *(Animal 21)*. When Pogo gets trapped in an old chest *(Animal 23)*, Churchy and Howland first think it is a pirate's chest (and should be buried), then that it is haunted (and should be buried), then that they have murdered Pogo by burying him alive (he has sneaked away), then that Pogo has come back to haunt them. Their jumping to conclusions in this manner is typical behavior.

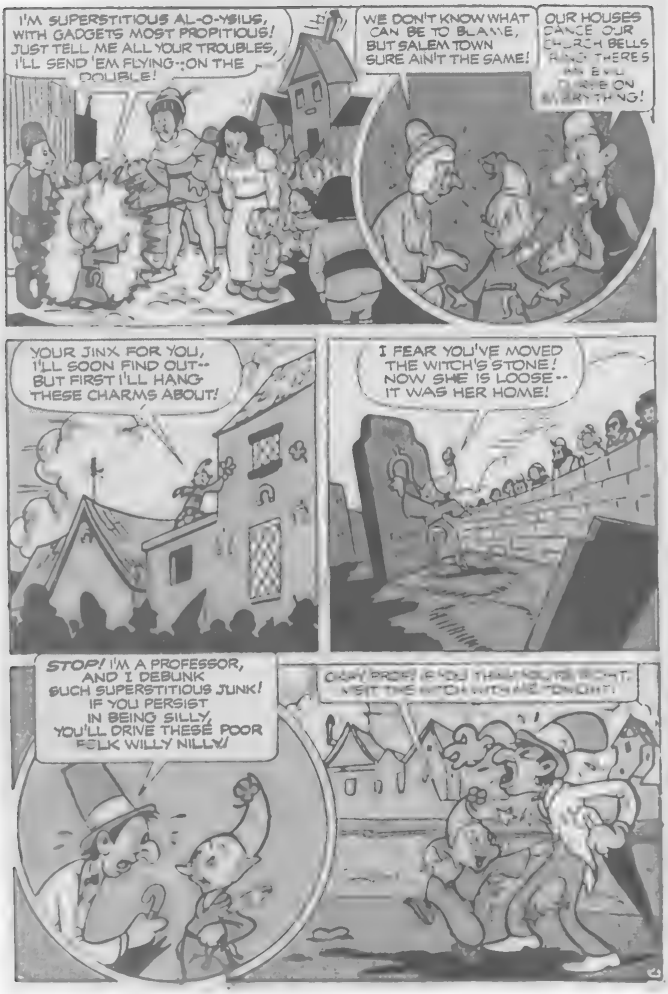
What this boils down to is that personal fantasy is more "real" than reality in the swamp. Disguises, mistaken identities, misinformed "Facts" half-baked notions, newly adopted roles, and other ways of confusing themselves contribute to the helter-skelter nature of the interactions among animals. A further example of this is a sequence from "The Deep Freeze" in *Pogo #3*.

Albert, trying to avoid digging up sweet potatoes with Pogo, dumps the contents of a feather pillow out of an upstairs window, thereby approximating a snowstorm. Meanwhile, Churchy, carrying an open jar of honey, trips and gets the jar stuck upsidedown over his head; the feathers cover him and make him unrecognizable to his friends. When Al and Pogo see him, they think he is a Snowy Owl, a harbinger of an early and cold winter. They predict snow (forgetting for the nonce that they live in a swamp and that it is August). Furthermore, since Churchy's words are garbled, coming from within a jar full of honey, Pogo bundles up warmly and rushes over to Howland Owl's house to get him to translate the Snowy Owl's language.

Howland also is easly convinced that it is cold and snowing out, and he, too, dresses in appropriate attire for a blizzard. Enroute to Pogo's house they pass a rabbit and frog who thing they are a safari from Mars. Howland faints from the heat, but Pogo—thoroughly convinced by his fantasies—thinks it is from the cold. Pogo puts Howland on the stove to thaw. Churchy pulls a gun out and points it at his own head. Al and Pogo are aghast at the apparent suicide, but Churchy merely blows the jar to pieces. Restored to his old self he then straightens things out.

These episodes I have cited are by no means singular. As representatives of the comedic style of the early Pogo stories, they stand as complex reworkings of the funny animal genre, leading away from one tradition in the comic books and foreshadowing the apex of Kelly's talented vision in the daily comic strip of the Fifties. The links between the two media will be explored in the next installment, as I look at particular Pogo stories that appeared both in the comic book and in the comic strip.

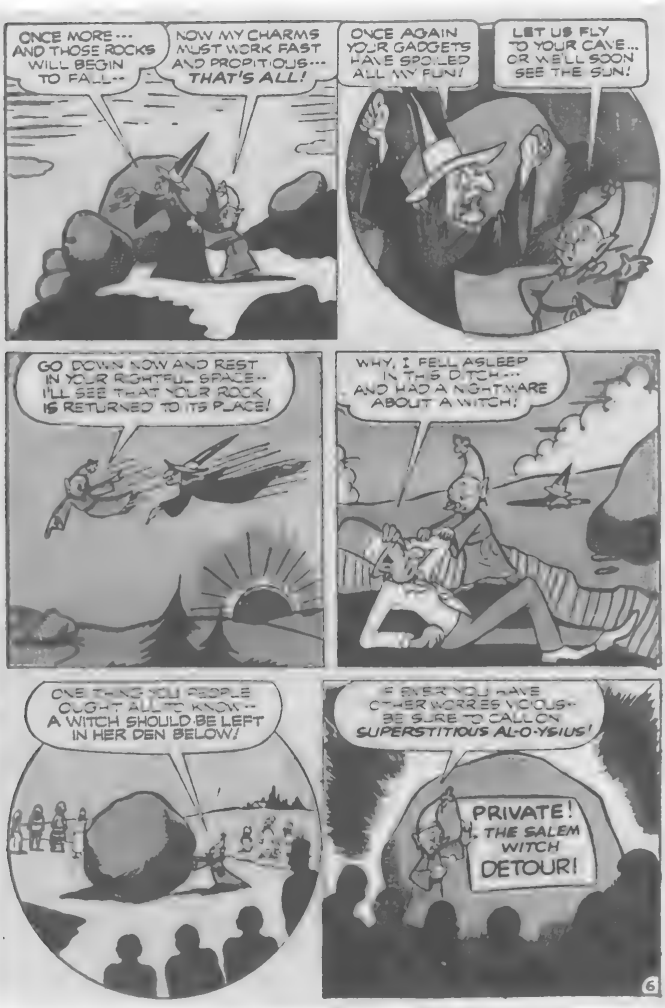

SUPERSTITIOUS
AL-O-YSIUS
I CLOSE MY EY[illegible] AND COUNT T[illegible] FULL MOON WILL BRING GOOD LUCK TO ME!
HIS GOOD LUCK CHARMS I CAN'T ABIDE... HIS MAGIC HAS ME TERRIFIED!
THE LEGEND OF SUPERSTITIOUS AL-O-YSIUS.
THE LUCKY SEVENTH SON IS HE OF THE GREAT GODDESS FORTUNA... HIS MAGIC POWERS WAX BRIGHT BENEATH THE MIDNIGHT SPELL OF LUNA! HIS MOTHER SENT HIM DOWN TO BRING GOOD LUCK TO MORTAL FOLKS! BUT DON'T RELY TOO MUCH UPON HIS SUPERSTITIOUS JOKES!
A STRANGE DISTURBANCE HAS COME DOWN UPON THE STREETS OF SALEM TOWN!
RUN, FOLKS! THOSE HEAVY ROCKS WILL KILL! THEY COME FROM NOWHERE ...DOWN OUR HILL!
WE'RE IN THE GRIP OF AN EVIL POWER! IT'S RINGING THE BELLS IN THE CHURCH TOWER!
BONG!
BONG!


I'M SUPERSTITIOUS AL-O-YSIUS, WITH GADGETS MOST PROPITIOUS! JUST TELL ME ALL YOUR TROUBLES, I'LL SEND 'EM FLYING--ON THE DOUBLE!
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT CAN BE TO BLAME, BUT SALEM TOWN SURE AIN'T THE SAME!
OUR HOUSES DANCE, OUR CHURCH BELLS RING, THERE'S AN EVIL DOOM ON EVERYTHING!
YOUR JINX FOR YOU, I'LL SOON FIND OUT-- BUT FIRST I'LL HANG THESE CHARMS ABOUT!
I FEAR YOU'VE MOVED THE WITCH'S STONE! NOW SHE IS LOOSE-- IT WAS HER HOME!
STOP! I'M A PROFESSOR, AND I DEBUNK SUCH SUPERSTITIOUS JUNK! IF YOU PERSIST IN BEING SILLY, YOU'LL DRIVE THESE POOR FOLK WILLY NILLY!
OKAY, PROF! IF YOU THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, VISIT THIS WITCH WITH ME TONIGHT!

AT THIS WITCHING HOUR OF MIDNIGHT...
BAH! THIS NONSENSE MAKES MY STOMACH SOUR
THAT STONE STOOD ON THE WITCH'S ABODE...
AS WE GO DOWN, I'LL HOLD THIS CHARM, IT WILL PROTECT US FROM ALL HARM!
I FEEL NONE OF THAT SILLY FEAR, BECAUSE THERE IS NO WITCH DOWN
DO NOT BENEATH THAT LADDER GO, IT CANNOT BRING YOU AUGHT BUT WOE!
YOU MUST TALK BETTER SENSE, MY LAD! UNLESS YOU WANT TO MAKE ME MAD!
LOOK OUT! BEWARE OF THAT BLACK CAT!
MORE STUFF AND NONSENSE
...WHAT WAS THAT?
OH-OH! THAT LOOKING GLASS YOU BROKE! YOU'LL FIND THAT BAD LUCK IS NO JOKE!
CRASH!
STOP! VANISH! DISAPPEAR!!! NO VISITORS ALLOWED DOWN HERE!
3

WHAT'S THAT? IT'S THE SALEM HAG! I'M LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS... AAOHH!
HE'S FAINTED! NOW WHAT CAN WE DO?
HERE...LET HIM DRINK THIS WITCH'S BREW!
OR, IF HE CANNOT DRINK IT DOWN, MAYBE HE DESER..ES TO DROWN!
WHERE AM I? I'M IN A CAVE! I MUST GET OUT OF THE WITCH'S CAVE!
HELP! MURDER!! LEMME OUTA HERE.
HE'S DONE—BUT IT'S OF YOU I'M SCARED! YOUR CHARMS HAVE MADE ME FEEL... DESPAIRED.
4

I'M HERE TO HELP YOU! FEEL NO DREAD! I'LL GET THAT STONE BACK OVER YOUR HEAD!
I USED TO LIVE IN DISMAL CHEER, FOR NIGH TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEAR! NOW FOR A WEEK I'VE HAUNTED THE VILLAGE-- WHY DID YOU HAVE TO STOP MY PILLAGE?
FOR A WEEK I'VE HAD REVENGE ON THOSE JERKS... ..COME...I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT WORKS!
DO YOU THINK IT WAS SPORTING TO SCARE PEOPLE?
TUT, TUT, MY BOY! WE'LL START IN THE STEEPLE!
A WAVE OF MY HANDS, AND THE BELLS RING DEEP--
THAT NOISE HAS SPOILED THE PEOPLE'S SLEEP!
BONG!
ANOTHER SMALL WAVE-- AND THE HOUSES SHAKE!
ENOUGH! YOUR BLACK MAGIC I'LL OVERTAKE!
5


ONCE MORE... AND THOSE ROCKS WILL BEGIN TO FALL--
NOW MY CHARMS MUST WORK FAST AND PROPITIOUS... THAT'S ALL!
ONCE AGAIN YOUR GADGETS HAVE SPOILED ALL MY FUN!
LET US FLY TO YOUR CAVE... OR WE'LL SOON SEE THE SUN!
GO DOWN NOW AND REST IN YOUR RIGHTFUL SPACE-- I'LL SEE THAT YOUR ROCK IS RETURNED TO ITS PLACE!
WHY, I FELL ASLEEP IN THE DITCH... AND HAD A NIGHTMARE ABOUT A WITCH!
ONE THING YOU PEOPLE OUGHT ALL TO KNOW-- A WITCH SHOULD BE LEFT IN HER DEN BELOW!
IF EVER YOU HAVE OTHER WORRIES VICIOUS-- BE SURE TO CALL ON SUPERSTITIOUS AL-O-YSIUS!
PRIVATE! THE SALEM WITCH DETOUR!
6

from MARS
DEATH IN THE SOIL
TO EXPIATE MARS' ONLY FELONY IN FIFTY YEARS, TARKA AND THE GIRL, ZIRA, ARE EXILED FROM THAT ENLIGHTENED PLANET! DURING THEIR EXILE, THEY MUST DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO A CRUSADE AGAINST EVIL ON EARTH! IF TARKA AND ZIRA FAIL IN THEIR MISSION, EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED, AND THEY WILL DIE IN THE HOLOCAUST!
I'LL HAVE THE SYNCHROTRON OPERATING AGAIN SHORTLY, PROFESSOR.
EVEN IF YOU REPAIR THE MACHINE WE ARE TOO LATE! THE UNITED STATES IS DOOMED!
IN WASHINGTON, D.C. TARKA, IN HIS EARTH DISGUISE AS ALAN WHEELER, AND ZIRA, WHOSE EARTH IDENTITY IS ZIRA WINTERS, SECRETARY TO GENERAL CLAYMORE OF ARMY INTELLIGENCE, ARE DINING!
SOMETHING ODD HAPPENED TODAY, TARKA! THEY THREW A MEDICAL RESEARCH PROBLEM ON GENERAL CLAYMORE'S DESK!
MEDICAL RESEARCH? I THOUGHT HIS ASSIGNMENT WAS CIVIL DEFENSE!
IT'S SOMETHING ABOUT RADIO-ACTIVE ISOTOPES! THE SYNCHROTON AT MID-WESTERN UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH, AND IT'S THE ONLY MACHINE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING THE NEW CHEMICAL, RADIO-ACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS!
WHO WOULD WANT TO STOP THE PRODUCTION OF RADIO-ACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS? WE MUST LOOK INTO THIS, ZIRA!

THAT NIGHT, TARKA TAKES OFF IN HIS WHIRLING DISC-CRAFT FROM THE PARK WHERE HIS MACHINE IS CONCEALED...
OFFICER, I TELL YOU I SAW A FLYING SAUCER! IT FLEW RIGHT OUT OF THE BUSHES... WHOOSH! LIKE THAT!
HA, HA! SURE, "FLYING SAUCERS!" THE NEXT THING YOU'LL BE TELLING ME IS YOU SAW A MARTIAN FLY'N IT! HA, HA!
AT THE HOME OF THE EMINENT NUCLEAR PHYSICIST, PROFESSOR KARL WALLENSTEIN, NEAR THE CAMPUS OF MID-WESTERN UNIVERSITY.
UNCLE KARL, WHERE ARE YOU GOING AT THIS HOUR?
TO THE LABORATORY, MARSHA. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SYNCHROTRON!
RESEARCH LABORATORY OFFICIAL BUSINESS ONLY
MAYBE IF I CHECK THE WIRING ONCE MORE I MAY FIND A CLUE
WHAT'S THAT? THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE SYNCHROTRON ROOM BUT I LEFT IT LOCKED!
ARE YOU SURE THE MACHINE CAN'T BE FIXED IN TIME, LEIMER?
HA, I KNOW MY BUSINESS. THAT'S WHY I'M CROSSING THESE TWO WIRES! EVEN IF THE PROFESSOR REWIRES THE CONDENSORS HE WON'T BE ABLE TO TRACK DOWN THIS LITTLE SHORT-CIRCUIT FOR WEEKS!
DR. LEIMER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THAT CONTROL PANEL?
I THOUGHT MAYBE THE TROUBLE WAS IN THESE WIRES, PROFESSOR! I'M ONLY TRYING TO FIX THEM!
2

THAT'S A LIE! YOU WERE SHORT-CIRCUITING THESE WIRES... I SAW YOU! MY OWN LABORATORY ASSISTANT!
ALL RIGHT PROFESSOR, TURN AROUND WITH YOUR HANDS UP! YOU KNOW TOO MUCH!
GET INTO THE CAR, PROFESSOR! LEIMER, THEY'LL QUESTION YOU ABOUT WALLENSTEIN'S DISAPPEARANCE... BUT YOU KNOW NOTHING! YOU WERE HOME ALL NIGHT, UNDERSTAND?
YES, I-I UNDERSTAND!
ABOUT AN HOUR LATER IN A DESERTED FARMHOUSE HIDE-OUT OUTSIDE THE CITY
YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS! AS SOON AS MY KIDNAPPING IS DISCOVERED THE F.B.I. WILL INVESTIGATE
YOU UNDER-ESTIMATE US PROFESSOR. BY TOMORROW MORNING THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE A MUCH BIGGER PROBLEM THAN YOUR DISAPPEARANCE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
STARTING TOMORROW MORNING AMERICA WILL HAVE A FAMINE THAT WILL SPREAD LIKE WILD-FIRE! WITHIN TWO MONTHS HALF THE POPULATION WILL BE DEAD! YOU SEE, PROFESSOR, STARVATION IS MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN BLOODSHED!
FOR MANY WEEKS AGENTS HAVE BEEN AT WORK SECRETLY SPRAYING THE GREAT GRAIN FIELDS OF THE MID-WEST WITH A NEW BLIGHT! BY TOMORROW MORNING ALL THAT GRAIN WILL HAVE WITHERED AND DIED!
BUT WHAT ABOUT LEIMER? AND THE SYNCHROTRON?
OUR SCIENTISTS FOUND THAT THE RADIO-ACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS PRODUCED BY YOUR MACHINE COULD STOP THE BLIGHT INSTANTLY IF USED IN TIME! THAT'S WHY WE PAID LEIMER TO PUT THE MACHINE OUT OF COMMISSION. NOW NOTHING CAN STOP US!

MEANWHILE, TARKA ARRIVES AT PROFESSOR
AFTER I RANG THE LABORATORY AND GOT NO ANSWER, I CONTACTED THE FOUNDRY FOR WHEELER! I'M TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED!
DON'T WORRY MISS I'M SURE WE CAN NOTE HIM. NOW TELL ME IS THERE ANY OTHER PLACE HE EVER GOES?
HE... SOMETIMES HE GOES TO KURT LEIMER'S HOUSE KURT IS UNCLE'S ASSISTANT... BUT
HIS ASSISTANT EH? I THINK I'LL CALL ON KURT LEIMER
MR. LEIMER, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS! MAY I COME IN?
UH..YES, OF COURSE! BUT, BELIEVE ME, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING... I... I'VE BEEN HOME ALL NIGHT!
I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN HELP!
MUST
GOT TO GO TO IGOR RIGHT AWAY... I'M FRIGHTENED!
THERE HE GOES... INTO THAT FARMHOUSE! WELL, HERE'S WHERE THE CRUSADER FROM MARS STEPS INTO THE PICTURE...

LEMMER, YOU FOOL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU MAY HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED!
DON'T WORRY! I KEPT LOOKING BEHIND ME -- THERE WAS NO ONE!
ABOVE YOU!
WHAT? GET HIM! YOU FOOLS, GET HIM!
OHHH!
UGGHHH!
IF ONLY TO GET OUT OF
OHHHHH!
IN A FEW MOMENTS PROFESSOR WALLENSTEIN EXPOSES THE PLOT TO TARKA
I SEE! SO WE'VE GOT TO MAKE THE PHOSPHOROUS RADIO-ACTIVE
PLAIN ELEMENTAL PHOSPHOROUS
THE UNIVERSITY WAREHOUSE, BUT EVEN IF I FIXED THE MACHINE NOW WE COULD NEVER CONVERT IN TIME!
AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER AT THE
WELL, THAT'S THE LAST SACK. FROM HERE ON IT'S A RACE AGAINST TIME!
THEN UP... UP... UP IN THE WHIRLING DISC-CRAFT TO THE MARS SUB-STATION HIGH
THE FATE OF EARTH IS IN MY HANDS
6

...AND THAT'S THE WHOLE STORY, MARSHAL! NOW, IF WE SHOOT THIS PHOSPHOROUS OUT INTO SPACE, EXPOSED THROUGH THIS PLASTIC SHELL THE COSMIC RAYS SHOULD WORK ON IT... AND MAKE IT RADIO-ACTIVE IN A MATTER OF SECONDS!
OUT IN SPACE, THE MYSTERIOUS AND POWERFUL COSMIC RADIATIONS HIT THE EXPOSED PHOSPHOROUS...
WORTH A TRY... NOW CAP THE ROCKET AND WE'LL FIRE IT!
WHEN MAGNETIC RADAR-GRAPPLERS BRING THE ROCKET BACK, ITS CARGO HAS CHANGED TO RADIO-ACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS. TARKA LOADS IT INTO HIS DISPERSAL AND OFF ON HIS FIRST BEGINS SYSTEMATICALLY TO SPRAY THE THOUSANDS OF SQUARE MILES OF GRAIN FIELDS IN THE MIDDLE WEST..
ALL NIGHT LONG THE LITTLE CRAFT WHIRLS ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE. THEN IN THE MORNING...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... NOT A SINGLE CASE OF BLIGHT DEVELOPED! THE PHOSPHOROUS AND THE BLIGHT CHEMICALS COMPLETELY NEUTRALIZED EACH OTHER! THE CROPS ARE SAVED!
BACK TO HEADQUARTERS A.S.C.
GENERAL CLAYMORE S BESIDE HIMSELF HE RECEIVED A FLOOD OF REPORTS FROM PEOPLE WHO SAW A "FLYING SAUCER" LAST NIGHT, AND FOUR ENEMY AGENTS WERE TURNED IN TO F.B.I. HEADQUARTERS WITH A NOTE... SIGNED WITH A CIRCLE AND AN ARROW!
SOON, ZIRA, WE SHALL HAVE CHANGED THESE FELON BRANDS INTO BADGES OF HONOR!
NO ORDINARY HUMAN BEING COULD HAVE DONE THIS! BUT HAVE NO FEAR, YOUR SECRET IDENTITY IS SAFE WITH ME! WHOEVER YOU ARE... MY THANKS TO YOU ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICA!
THANK YOU, PROFESSOR WALLENSTEIN! WE MAY BE SEEING EACH OTHER AGAIN!
HERE WE GO AGAIN, ZIRA! MARS IS CALLING! ANOTHER MISSION!

DEATH SHIP
by Jack Davis

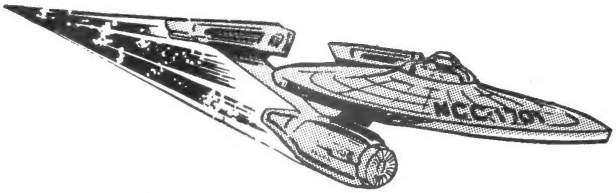
AS THE SHIP DRONED ON, COMMANDER WOODRUFF RECALLED IN RETROSPECT THAT FATEFUL NIGHT THAT SEEMED SO LONG AGO, WHEN HE BADE FAREWELL TO HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE, WENDRA.
BEN, YOU'RE WEARING YOUR SPACE GEAR! THAT MEANS YOU'RE SHIPPING OUT!---OH DARLING, HOW CAN YOU DO IT? HOW CAN YOU LEAVE ME AT A TIME LIKE THIS? THE BABY WILL ARRIVE IN A FEW MORE WEEKS!
BUT I NEED YOU, BEN, AND SO WILL THE CHILD! OH DARLING, EVER SINCE I KNEW YOU, YOU'VE BEEN DISCONTENTED, AND RESTLESS! WHY DO YOU CONTINUALLY GO BACK INTO DEEP SPACE? WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN SEARCHING FOR ALL THESE YEARS?
I DON'T KNOW, WENDRA, PERHAPS I'M LOOKING FOR PEACE OF MIND; A PLACE WHERE A MAN'S SOUL CAN FIND TRANQUILITY! IT'S SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, AMONG THE STARS!
I'M SORRY, WENDRA, I'VE GOT TO GO! THEY NEED MY EXPERIENCE ON THIS FLIGHT!
IT'S A WILL-O-THE-WISP BEN, IT DOESN'T EXIST! AREN'T YOU SATISFIED WITH ME AND THE CHILD THAT WILL SOON BE OURS? MUST YOU GO DO FIND IT, I'LL RETURN FOR IT NEVER GO ON! YOU AND THE CHILD! THEN OUR SEARCHING FOR A LIFE WILL BE FILLED WITH MYTHICAL PLANET MISHAPS OF PARADISE!
WENDRA, I LOVE YOU MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF, BUT THIS IS BIGGER THAN BOTH OF US! I'VE GOT TO GO BACK, DARLING, AND WHEN I'VE GOT THE CHILD! THEN OUR LIVES WILL BE FILLED WITH HAPPINESS OF PARADISE!
HE DID EMBARK UPON HIS MISSION THAT DAY TO ONE OF THOSE REMOTE ALLURING STARS. BUT THE RESULT OF THAT FLIGHT WAS NEARLY CATASTROPHIC.
MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS! PREPARE TO OPEN FIRE!
DURING THE ENSUING BATTLE, ONE OF THE REAR ROCKETS OF THE FLAG SHIP WAS BLASTED OUT BY ENEMY FIRE.
COMMANDER WOODRUFF HIMSELF DONNED A SPACE SUIT AND WENT OUT TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE. WHEN THE TASK HAD BEEN COMPLETED, HE PREPARED TO RETURN TO THE INTERIOR, BUT WAS SUDDENLY ATTACKED BY A HORDE OF ALIEN SPACE MEN.
COMMANDER WOODRUFF LOOKS FOR HIS WEAPON
23

SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOU, COMMANDER, BUT WE'RE ENTERING ORION'S ORBIT, AND THE SHIP IS APPROACHING A METEOR SHOWER
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU MEN NOT TO DISTURB ME WHEN I'M CONCENTRATING! WHY DIDN'T YOU PUT IT ON THE SCREEN?
BUT SIR, I DID THROW OPEN THE FORCE SCREENS! BUT THEY DID NOT SEEM TO HOLD BACK THE METEORS!
YOU SHOULD HAVE USED THIS AUXILIARY LEVER, I'LL GIVE IT MORE POWER! ... I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY ASSIGNED YOU TO THIS SHIP! YOU'RE NOT READY FOR SPACE FLIGHT!
"NOT READY FOR SPACE FLIGHT!" THE NERVE OF THAT GUY! I HAD THE HIGHEST SCHOLASTIC AND ACADEMIC RATING IN MY CLASS!... THAT CHEAP FOUR-EYED FAKER! IF HE EVER HAD TO ACTUALLY FACE A REALLY DANGEROUS SITUATION, I BET HE'D TURN CHICKEN!
WHAT A—
LISTEN, YOU LIL' SHORT CIRCUITED ANDROID CRUFT, I'D GIVE YOU TEN MINUTES AS A REMARK
OOH, SO I'LL BE
I HAVE TRAINED AND COMMANDED MEN ... IN EXPEDITION TO MONSTROUS ... WAS A VERY KEEN ... I ... IT WAS MY FIRST BRUSH WITH ... BUT MY WORST MOMENT WAS TO ... TOUR OF MY ... CREATURES ... ME, BUT ...
ANOTHER TIME, ON ANOTHER WORLD, WE WERE CAPTURED BY A GROUP OF ... TO CHOOSE ... DEFORMED ... PRICING ... ANY OF ... GRANT ...

OKAY, OKAY, SO HE ISN'T A COW WARD! BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S HEART OUT FOR HIS WIFE AND KIDS! A BEING IS A BEING ON A HUMAN CHANGE
YOU DUMB JERK, CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S EATING HIS HEART OUT FOR HIS WIFE AND KIDS!
YES, HE WAS THINKING OF HIS WIFE AND CHILD; HE WAS THINKING OF THAT EVENTFUL DAY, THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN HE RETURNED HOME FROM A LONG VOYAGE, AND WAS WELCOMED BY WENDRA.
BEN!
AS HE DREW HER IN HIS ARMS AND KISSED HER, HE REALIZED IN AN INSTANT HOW LONELY HE HAD BEEN DURING THOSE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MONTHS IN SPACE! HE PROMISED HIMSELF THEN AND THERE, HE WOULD NEVER GO BACK!
HE RECALLED THE FIRST TIME HE SAW HIS SON, AH, HE WAS A SPLENDID LITTLE FELLOW WITH CURLY [illegible] PROUD HE WAS OF HIS JOY!
FOR ONE YEAR, HE WAS HAPPY AND CONTENTED WITH HIS FAMILY. HE HAD ALL THAT AN ORDINARY MAN COULD DESIRE.
BUT THEN, BEN WOODRUFF, WAS NO ORDINARY MAN!
WENDRA--I--I--BEN, IT ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN--AGAIN, BUT I'VE GOT TO GO BACK ONCE MORE!
OH, BEN, PLEASE DON'T GO!---I CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF LOOSING YOU AGAIN! I BEG YOU, I IMPLORE YOU, DON'T LEAVE US, DARLING!
PLEASE, WENDRA, DON'T MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR ME! IT WON'T BE FOR LONG, AND THIS TIME I'M SURE I'LL FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR; WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR!
MISFORTUNE CONTINUALLY LOOMED THE PATH OF COMMANDER WOODRUFF, AND THAT DAY THAT HE DEPARTED WAS NO EXCEPTION. HIS SHIP WAS ATTACKED BY A TITANIC ENTITY FROM A DARK AND DISTANT WORLD.
4

BY SWIFT ACTION, THE CREW HAD MANAGED TO ESCAPE DISASTER THAT DAY. UNDER COMMANDER WOODRUFF'S DIRECTION, THE TERRIBLE CREATURE WAS BLASTED TO COSMIC DUST.
COMMANDER, OUR VIEWS OF "STAR Y" REVEAL A SUDDEN INTENSITY OF COMBUSTION! IT IS TURNING INTO A NOVA! IT'S GONNA BLOW ANY TIME, AND WE'RE RIGHT IN ITS PATH!
WHAT? ------ WE'VE GOT TO REVERSE ROCKETS IMMEDIATELY!
ATTENTION ALL CREWMEN! NOW HEAR THIS! NOW HEAR THIS! EVERY MAN AT HIS STATION AT ONCE! DECELERATE THE SHIP AND OPEN UP ALL RETARDING ROCKETS! WE'LL NEED ALL THE FIRE-POWER WE CAN MUSTER TO OUTRACE THIS HOT GLOBE!
THE COMMANDER'S ORDERS WERE QUICKLY CARRIED OUT, BUT TO NO AVAIL----
SIR, THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THE STAR HAS INCREASED A HUNDRED FOLD! THE RETARDING ROCKETS HAVE NO EFFECT!
THROW IN MORE POWER! WE'VE GOT TO REVERSE OUR POSITION!
INSPITE OF THE HERCULEAN EFFORTS OF THE CREW TO TURN THE SHIP ABOUT, THE MIGHTY VESSEL CONTINUED ITS RELENTLESS COURSE, RIGHT TOWARD THE MAW OF THE SUPER NOVA---
THE STAR IS EXPANDING IN SIZE! THIS HEAT IS UNBEARABLE!
DON'T LOOSE YOUR HEADS! EACH MAN DON HIS SPACE SUIT! WE'LL HAVE TO ABANDON SHIP!
THE GASES ARE BEGINNING TO STREAK OUT!
THE MEN WERE QUICK TO OBEY BEN'S ORDER, BUT AN INSTANT LATER, THE UTTER FUTILITY OF THE EFFORT BECAME APPARENT---
THE FLAMES ARE COMING TOWARD US! THEY'LL SWALLOW THE SHIP! WE CAN'T ESCAPE!
WE'LL ALL DIE LIKE RATS!
I CAN'T STAND IT! I WANT TO LIVE! I WANT TO LIVE!
PANIC GRIPPED THE SOUL OF EVERY MAN ON BOARD THAT ILL-FATED SHIP, AS A HUGE TONGUE OF FLAME REACHED OUT TO ENGULF THE CRAFT IN AN INCANDESCENT EMBRACE OF DEATH---
BUT, AN INSTANT BEFORE CONTACT---
WENDRA! WENDRA! FORGIVE ME! FORGIVE ME FOR THE PAIN AND ANGUISH I'VE CAUSED YOU! YOU WERE RIGHT, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW!
I DIDN'T KNOW!
5

AND THEN THE TERRIBLE, ALL-CONSUMING ENVELOPE OF DEATH STRUCK! THE RIGID STEEL STRUCTURE COLLAPSED LIKE MATCH WOOD, AND CONDENSED INTO A WHITE-HOT STREAM. THE MAGAZINES EXPLODED WITH INTENSE CONCUSSIONS, AND THE CREW MEN OF THE DEATH SHIP WERE FLUNG OUT AMONG THE COSMOS.
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, BACK ON EARTH, WENDRA AWOKE FROM SLUMBER, SHOUTING HYSTERICALLY.
BEN! BEN! OH BEN, WHERE ARE YOU?
NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF THE CREW ESCAPED DEATH FROM THAT AWFUL HOLOCAUST.
HE'S DEAD! I KNOW HE'S DEAD!--- AT LAST THE THING I'VE DREADED ALL THIS TIME HAS HAPPENED!----OH BEN, HOW CAN I GO ON WITHOUT YOU?
MOMMIE! MOMMIE! I HEARD YOU CALL DADDY'S NAME! IS HE HOME? IS DADDY HERE WITH US?
HE'S NOT HOME, DARLING, BUT HE IS WITH US, IN SPIRIT! HE--HE'LL ALWAYS BE WITH US (SOB) FROM NOW ON!
THE NIGHT WORE ON, AND IN MILLIONS OF HOMES ON EARTH, PEOPLE SLEPT ON, UNDISTURBED; BUT OUT THERE, AMONG THE VISTAS OF IMMENSITY, A STAR GLOWS BRIGHTLY, AND THEN SLOWLY DIMINISHES TO ITS PREVIOUS SIZE. NOT A PARTICLE OF THE DEATH SHIP REMAINS!---BUT WHAT OF BEN WOODRUFF? DID HE AT LAST FIND THE PEACE HE HAD BEEN SEEKING? DID THE SWEET FRUITION OF HIS DESIRES AT LAST COME TRUE? THERE WAS NONE WHO COULD TELL..
THE END



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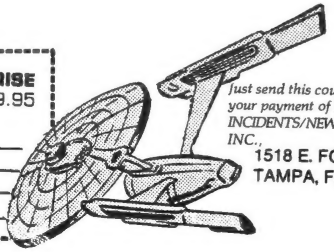

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